Linguistic Analysis Of Waiting For Godot: A Critical Survey

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Abstract

The present study aims to conduct semantic and syntactic analysis of Samuel Beckett's playWaiting for Godot, to explore the exploitation and utilization of these linguistic choices in the process of thematic construction. It highlights the role of language in the replication of significant aspects attached with the situational and mental states of the speaker. It has been found that Beckett has exploited the linguistic choices of semantics and syntax to reveal and signify the themes of the play and the disjointed and non-sequential words with fragmented and elliptic structures that have been deliberately used to connote to the prevalent themes of the play.

Keywords: Exploitation; Linguistic Choices, Semantics, Syntax; Themes

Introduction

The role of language is crucial in literature as language is the building block of literature. Both language and literature are interrelated. Literature cannot be separated from language. In the same way, language also cannot be fully comprehended and appreciated without the study of literature. In recent years, language has acquired a significant place as being the explorer of the mental state (psyche) of speaker. Language is no longer perceived only as a tool which expresses the thoughts, rather it has occupied a role as the representation of 'self'.

In the twentieth century, the positivistic approaches to language and thought began to lose their earlier footing; speculation about language took a new turn. The Theatre of Absurd had assumed the leading position in this play of language and proved quite revolutionary in its attitude toward language. The Absurdist playwrights made experiments with the form of language to make it suitable medium for the expression of their ideology. Language had achieved a new role and position. Among the major proponents of Theatre of Absurd, Samuel Beckett, on account of writing unusual plays

and exploring a new form of drama, holds a prior position because of his inexhaustible experiments both on linguistic and thematic grounds. He is considered one of the last modernist writers and key figure of the Theatre of the Absurd.

The play Waiting for Godot is a magnum opus in the literature which has astounded the world by its innovation and uniqueness. It carries all the features that can doom a literary genius to an unremitting failure. The play consists of no plot or action; rather, nothing really happens in the play. The setting of the play also seems to be insignificant with a low mound under a tree and two consecutive days. Two tramps are engaged in struggle to kill the time for a miraculous happening and arrival of Godot.They are engaging themselves in various activities to kill the time of prolonged waiting. They eat, drink, do merrymaking and sing-song, discuss many issues illogically and even try to commit suicide, but they cannot reduce their agitation of waiting. They are also encountered with two other characters Pozzo and Lucky in both the acts of play. Their prolonged and futile waiting makes them miserable in the eyes of reader. And the more miserable thing is that Godot never comes and their waiting never comes to an end. This sense of deprivation and nothingness is apparent through the very language of the play. Waiting for Godot was published and performed after Second World War. Although the play has no direct link with the war, it exquisitely imparts the chaotic state of mankind after the Second World War through the characters of Estragon and Viladimir.

The language ofWaiting for Godot has been a debatable argument over many of the last decades. The writer's command over the language usage to make it perfect representation of characters' state of mind is definitely marvelous. The synchronization between the absurd state of characters and their meaningless dialogues go beyond appreciation. As the synopsis reveals that there is no such action which can catch the attention of the readers, it is the language that wins the first place for Beckett among the contemporary writers. He has assigned an unconventional role to the language by minimizing its denotative function. The most important point in the play is that the language and the theme go side by side. As it is a play in which nothing specific happens, meaning has been created through linguistic choices, dialogues and expressions of language. The linguistics choices that are going to be addressed are semantic and syntactic that give the play more depth and meaning. This study is devoted to explore the expertise underlying the Beckett's choice of language.

Semantics is the leading branch of linguistics that studies meaning. It refers to the decontextualized and literal meaning that is communicated through language. The meaning occupies significant position in the study of language. For this reason the endeavor to find the meaning had been holding central and prior place in the study of language throughout the history.

Syntax refers to the rules and principles that govern the overall sequence and structure of the sentence. These arrangements and sequential patterns add meaning to a sentence

which otherwise may be lost. Chomsky (1957) has said that the order of words in a formation of a sentence carries much importance which directly affects the process of the retrieval of the meaning.

Structuralism upholds the belief that the meaning of anything depends on the structure in which it exists. Structural relativity gives absolute meaning to a particular thing that otherwise does not seem to convey any meaning at all. It carries us toward Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), who described language as a system of signs. A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept[signified] and a sound pattern [signifier]. The present study will imply two major concepts that structuralism advocates. Firstly, it will use the perspective of structuralism that meaning lies in the structures. This will be implied while analyzing the syntactic structures used in Waiting for Godot. Secondly, de Saussure's proposed concept of sign and signified will be employed while taking the semantic and syntactic choices as signs and themes as signified. By taking the structures as carrier of meaning and the words as signs that refer to signified, the study will search for the linguistic and thematic relevancy in the play.

Objectives

The study aims to internalize the concept of the language as a builder of themes and the writer's intentional or unconscious use of such linguistic choices that create an ideology in itself. It will surely bridge the gap that exists between linguistics and literature that are interrelated disciplines.As for as specific objectives are concerned, it is intended to revise all the thematic concepts ofWaiting for Godot with the analytic lens of a linguist.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the study aims to answer these questions:

- Do semantic choices inWaiting for Godot confer more depth on its meaning and theme?
- How does the exploitation of syntactic structures inWaiting for Godot support and accelerate its thematic significance?
- How does the framework of structuralism add more depth to the semantic and syntactic study ofWaiting for Godot?

Delimitations

The present research has analyzed the text taken fromWaiting for Godot, the English version published in 1952. This study is confined to the analysis of some specific excerpts that are found apt for the research purpose. The research has dealt with only two linguistic choices i.e. semantic and syntactic with the perspective of structuralism. Moreover, it has not focused on all of the thematic issues; rather, some selected themes

are probed into detail. The themes are not kept to be the direct concern of the study; rather, they are interlocked with linguistic choices for the purpose of seeking the meaning.

Literature Review

Waiting for Godot has been the special target of critics and researchers for some of the last decades. It has been widely appreciated and extensively criticized because of its linguistic and thematic novelty.The language of the play has allured many researchers to unfold its layers. But these layers have been folded so cunningly that still there are many depths to be explored. This study presents the review of the earlier works that were either related to language or related to the themes of the play because it aims to correlate the language with its themes.

Rahimipoor etal., (2011) analyze the role of language in the Theatre of Absurd as how Beckett has used language to deploy the existential themes in the play.They say that true realization of self makes a person silent and the person with the real sense of his self cannot speak too much. Beckett has made this concept more prominent by making two tramps indulge in meaningless talk because they are hankering after their identity of self and far away from it. Moreover, he compares the language with that of self on the basis of its time and space bound property. In an attempt to make the language to reveal the self, Beckett has freed language from time and space. So the attempt to destroy the rationality of words is actually a step to discover the self.

Andrew Kennedy (1991) argues that Beckett's consciousness about suffering and uncertainty of human beings must be deepened because of the aftermath of Second World War and surely it has evolved his conception about the instability of language to share the experiences by the survivors of war. The disintegration of language in Beckett's works is an attempt to depict authentic feelings of war.

Liao(2014) has selected the four plays of Beckett to elaborate his notion of language. He says that Beckett, like the other playwrights of the Theatre of Absurd, has changed the concept of language by rendering it as an insufficient tool of communication. As Absurdists do not believe in the existence of truth, they also do not believe in language as an agent of revealing and conveying the truth. Beckett raises the language from the stature of mere an instrument of communication and renders it the role of more than that. Indeed, it is not inaccurate to say that Beckett revalues language.

Esslin (1982), who firstly coined this term of 'Theatre of Absurd', argues that language has been devalued by the dramatist belonging to this theatre. Often a contradiction is found between what is spoken by characters and what is conveyed by the stage elements. By referring to the language of Beckett, he puts forward the notion that the playwright intentionally uses the language that is devoid of meaning to create a different type of experience in theatre. Moreover, he says that if meaning is lost, it will

directly question the instrument that is used to convey meaning i.e. language. According to him, Beckett has devalued the system of language to transmit a sense of meaninglessness in his work. Moreover, he says that silence in his works refers to the characters' inability to communicate.

Akhter etal., (2012) in their study are concerned with the grammatical deviations in Waiting for Godot. By discussing the purpose of these grammatical deviations, the researchers suggest that Beckett has deviated from the common pattern of English grammar in order to sustain the interest of the reader. This irregularity of dialogues seems as absurd to a common reader but for a researcher it is purposeful and burdened with deep thought.He proposes that elliptical utterances on the level of verb refer to the inaction of the play. Moreover, the inversion of syntactic order is also the most exploited technique of Beckett in which he changes the significance and meaning of words by changing their place.

While presenting the concept of deconstruction in Waiting for Godot, Akhtar (2016)argues that language carries many functions in the domain of linguistics but in Waiting for Godot, language performs two functions. First one is informative function that is to convey any piece of information. Second function that the language of Waiting for Godot fulfils, is expressive function that refers to the ability of words to evoke the emotion of the listener or reader. The researcher finds that it is the second function that has been emphasized preferably in the text.

While writing about the thematic significance of the play, Dontcheva (2015) holds the view that Waiting for Godotcan beinterpreted in so many ways. Beckett creates his own world that is neither true nor false. It is devoid of origin. It is a great machine like work that can produce multiple meanings. It opens the possibility of various interpretations whereas no derived conclusion can be true or false; it delineates itself the phenomenon of waiting.

Forster (1989) says that there is no absurdity in the works of Beckett. The elements of entertainment and absurdity that are found in his works veil a deep sense of mental anxiety. The superficial absurdities of his works are the true representation of his anguish at the atrocities of life. Forster quotes that in an interview, Beckett answered a question about the interpretation of his works by saying that he did not read philosophers. He was asked for the possibility of existentialism as a key to solve the problem or confusion that haunts his works. He answered with a remark that there is neither key nor a problem. It is here Foster takes his works under the 'scholastic obstetrics', a term presented by Swift to refer to the retrieval of those meanings that were far away from the author's intention.

While referring to the nothingness and meaninglessness inWaiting for Godot, Simoen (1991) argues that terrible idea of 'self' suffered a dynamic change in twentieth century.

This notion of self is terribly different than that of Classical and Romantic Ages. Now, it has become deconstructed, disintegrated, fragmented, shadowed, unstable, and submerged to the extent that it has become unable to tell a story in a logical sequence as the writers of earlier ages used to tell. This deterioration of self finds expression in Theatre of Absurd. Beckett's Characters portray this deconstructed idea of self, dealing with meaninglessness of the world.

Khan (2015), on the impact of absurdity in Waiting for Godot, states that dealing with the life of modern man, Waiting for Godot totally appears to be based on absurdism with its unconventional plot, unclear setting and passive characters. The conversation of characters has no positive axis and throughout the play it dwelt round the purposeless and unclear appointment with an undefined entity Godot. The part of the play is devoid of beginning, middle and end. The ending of the play is not conclusive. It seems to us that the tramps will surely come on the third day and resume their waiting. Everything in and about the play is burdened with absurdity.

Federman(1965) says that works of Beckett have defied all classifications and do not fit into any definition of genre. Unconventional form, cunning use of language, lack of coherence, and ambiguous statements lead to contradictory interpretations. The characters of Beckett are undertaking the journey without beginning or end. He further elaborates that there is no unity and coherence in the plot of Waiting for Godot. Beckett's plots are not organized or it can be said that there exists no plot in Beckett's works because of which, his works lead to apparent meaninglessness and chaos.

Structural Perspective

The present study has employed two major concepts that structuralism advocates. Firstly, it has used the perspective of structuralism that meaning lies in the structures. This concept was used while analyzing the syntactic structures used in Waiting for Godot. Secondly, de Saussure's proposed concept of sign and signified were used while taking the semantic and syntactic choices as signs and themes as signified. By taking the structures as carriers of meaning and words as signs that refer to signified, the study searched for the linguistic and thematic relevancy in the play.

Symbols Used in Syntactic Analysis

Syntactic categories of words are represented by symbols that are often consisted of abbreviation for that category. The common abbreviations or symbols of some categories are as follows:

'S' for 'Sentence', 'NP' for 'Noun Phrase', 'N' for 'Noun', 'PN' for 'Proper Noun', 'Art' for 'Articles', 'V' for 'Verb', 'VP' for 'Verb Phrase', 'PP' for 'Prepositional Phrase', 'Pro' for 'Pronoun', 'Adj' for 'Adjective', and 'Adv' for "'Adverb'.

There are some symbols that are generally used to represent syntactic feature.

- First is the sign of arrow →
  Arrow is used for the expression of 'consists of or rewrites as'
    Art + N → NP
  This is simply shorthand expression of saying that the combination of article and noun rewrites as noun phrase.
- Second symbol is the use of star *
  This sign points to the ungrammatical sentences. Any violation in grammatical rules is represented with this sign.

These symbols will be relatively analyzed inWaiting for Godot to consider the role of language as the carrier of meaning.

Interrogative Sentences and Theme of Ambiguity

This study aimed to find out various semantic and syntactic choices that Beckett has used to raise and intensify for different thematic issues. One of these linguistic choices is making use of interrogative sentences. A deliberate reading of the text shows that Beckett has made use of interrogative sentences repeatedly. In common use of language, the writer's or speaker's priority of using interrogative sentences refers to diverse facets about their choice and intentions. In Waiting for Godot, it is more apt to study this linguistic choice of putting questions with reference to the confused state of characters' minds. Not only the questions show the ambiguities but their answers or replies are equally ambiguous in their syntactic and semantic relevancy to questions.

Ambiguity is the key element in the Theatre of Absurd. Everything is ambiguous in the play. We do not know anything about the identity, occupations and desires of the characters except their prolong waiting. Nothing is sure about their purpose of waiting which ends in futile twice. The arduous sense of waiting haunts them throughout the play irrespective of the fact that they are unaware about the identity of Godot and the place where Godot has to come. The day of meeting and running day are also not certain. The other characters, Lucky and Pozzo and their identity are also hazy and vague. The repetitive use of interrogative sentences is quite apt to create these ambiguities and making them more emphatic.

In this play, Estragon and Viladimir are randomly putting so many questions. Beckett has exploited the sentences with this syntactic structure to reveal the characters' state of mind as more ambiguous and confused. The repetitive use of interrogative sentences reflects the ambiguities in the minds of the characters of the play. The play opens with a pithy dialogue:

"Estragon: Nothing to be done".   ⟶   SVO structure

(Beckett, 2016: 2)

This speech shows a conclusive judgment on the part of Estragon that he has nothing to do at all. The point is: why does this sentence seemto present conclusive judgment and why does it seem to be carrying a certainty on the part of speaker? If we syntactically analyze this dialogue, we will come to know that its SVO structure advocates and carries the element of certainty on the part of speaker. But what happens when this SVO syntactic structure is replaced by VSO i.e. descriptive is replaced by interrogative sentence? If we uphold the view that SVO reflexes the surety, certainty and conclusive judgment, VSO/VS will definitely mirrors the confusion, chaos and ambiguity.

The second dialogue of Estragon is:

"Estrogen: Am I?"   ⟶ VS structure

(Beckett,2016: 2)

This VS structure presents the Estragon's ambiguity and vague idea about his own existence. The emphatic effect of this utterance would surely be minimized if it was in descriptive order e.g. I am not sure about my existence. VSO does not only stand for ambiguity but also for the emphatic state of bewilderment.

Interrogative sentences are characterized as syntactic units which serve to express questions. If putting question shows lack of knowledge or ambiguous state of mind on the part of Estragon, insufficient and illogical reply of Viladimir makes him co-partner in this ambiguity.

"Estragon: I asked you a question?   ⟶ SVO with question mark

     Viladimir: Ah.

     Estragon: Did you reply?   ⟶   VSO structure

Viladimir: How's the carrot?   VS structure ⟶

Estragon: It's a carrot".

(Beckett, 2016: 13)

Here the question of Estragon demands semantically laden statement that can work as sufficient and logical answer to his question. But the reply of Viladimir does not seem to be satisfactory. The insufficient semantics placement that is a single expression 'Ah' evokes further question instead of answering the first one. The second utterance of Viladimir also carries semantic irrelevancy. Instead of answering, he puts another question that is semantically out of place. It seems they are not getting or paying attention to each other. They are throwing words in space to fill the void or to kill the time of waiting. And their words are as uncertain and ambiguous as the entity for whom they are waiting.

The semantics and syntax of question provide a glimpse of questioner's state of mind. A semantically laden question (SLQ) and a question having VSO carries much interrogative force and requires to be answered. Wisniewski (2003) states that "One should not identify answers with replies. In principle, every expression can serve as a reply to any question" (p. 14).The uncertainty and ambiguity is not only confined to the syntactic structure (VSO) that has been repetitively used but there also exists semantic ambiguity that is found in the replies of raised questions. There is hardly any question that meets 'optimal possible answer'. Wisniewsk defines 'Optimal Possible Answer' as congruent, conclusive, complete, exhaustive and conclusive.

"Estragon: His name is Godot?   SVO with ~~questio~~n mark

                Viladimir: I think".

                (Beckett, 2016: 14)

Here, the answer of Viladimir is not optimal in the sense that it does not convey the required information. Lack of optimality reflexes the lack of knowledge and uncertainty of Viladimir. Here, the questioning in declarative mode shows that Estragon is presupposing the name of Godot and he is just wanting confirmation of Viladimir but the ambiguous reply of Viladimir does not yield confirmation to his supposition and ambiguity takes place.

The close reading of the text shows that more often we find replies not as a direct answer. Wisniewski (2003) defines that direct answer: "gives exactly what the question calls for . . . The label `direct' . . . connotes both logical sufficiency and immediacy" (p. 13). Anyway, the replies of Beckett's characters lack logical sufficiency and immediacy. These covert replies reflect the ambiguity that exists in the mind and surrounding of the speakers.

"Estragon: And we?

        Viladimir: I beg your pardon?

        Estragon: I said, And we?

        Viladimir: I don't understand.

            Estragon: Where do we come in?

        Viladimir: Come in?"

(Beckett, 2016: 20)

This is another chunk presented as further elaboration of their bewildering states of mind when they are putting questions one after another. This sequential questioning

deciphers the ambiguity that haunts the play and the minds of both Estragon and Viladimir. The perspective of structuralism, that structure confirms the meaning, seems very apt here in case of interrogative structures.

The Reflections of Semantic Variation and Syntactic Similarity

Albert Camus (1975)denotes to various significant aspects of human life. He argues that there exists an underlying, identical and repetitive structure behind the apparent assorted actions of all men.

Rising, tram, four hours in the office or factory, meal, tram, four hours of work, meal, sleep and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, according to the same rhythm — this path is followed most of the time ... In itself weariness has   something about it ... Likewise and during every day of an unillustrious life, time   carries us. (19)

On the surface level, the varied actions of men continue and men undertake different activities one after another. This is how life goes on. But this rhythm remains the same and this path is easily followed most of the time. In writing Waiting for Godot,Beckett presented an epitome of human life, as reflected by Camus. The basic structure of life or what Shakespeare called the stage, remains the same but actors are changed. This replication in the broader metaphorical view, denotes to the theme of role taking that is the life itself. Like the circular wheel of life that awards some people with upward position while rendering others downward, the role changing of Estragon and Viladimir is also very suggestive and meaningful. Beckett attaches more importance to dialogues rather than action. As there is no significant action in the play, the circularity of the play happens because of its dialogues.

In the beginning of the play, this reflection of life occurs when Estragon and Viladimir are discussing about the boots of Estragon.

"Viladimir: It hurts?

Estragon: Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!"

(Beckett, 2016: 3)

Here occurs the replication as well.

Another example of this role changing can be quoted from the play:

"Estragon: Let's go".

(Beckett, 2016: 7)

"Viladimir: Let's go".

(Beckett, 2016: 21)

Their roles alter, dialogues exchange and they seem to be indulged in various activities but their essential motif remains the same that is waiting for Godot. This is how life goes on. Similar pattern of life is followed by one after another. If we relate this concept with language, it carries us toward de Saussure's proposed concepts of Langue (underlying structure of language) and Parole (the actual speech utterances).

Waiting for Godot is generally taken as representation of human life. Its language also reflexes the complexity of human life. The close reading of the play is suggestive of this linguistic structuralism with same syntactic structure and semantic variation.And the semantic variation is the representation of varied human activities that go on according to a similar pattern. This connection between langue and parole, syntactic similarity and semantic variation and similar pattern of life and various activities of human beings stand in same relation to one another and closely depict the structuralism's view of signs and significations.

Various examples from the text of Waiting for Godot can be viewed as the illustration of this similarity between the patterns of language and human life. There are many excerpts in the play where there is accurate demonstration of this close connection. On seeing some unusual marks on Lucky's neck, they use this rhythm:

"Estragon: It's the rope.

Viladimir: It's the rubbing.

Estragon: It's inevitable.

Viladimir: It's the knot.

Estragon: It's the chafing".

(Beckett, 2016: 18-19)

An intensive and structuralist study of the play will be suggestive of the fact that underlying structure of the play itself remains the same in both the acts. The play comprises of two acts and both the acts comprise of two consecutive days. The two major characters Estragon and Viladimir appear in both acts and are found to be indulged in the same crucial action that is waiting for an entity Godot which never comes twice. Two other characters Pozzo and Lucky come to Estragon and Viladimir in both acts. The appearance of messenger boy is also repeated twice. The setting of the play also remains the same except a few leaves that appear on the tree that was leafless in first act. So, if we look into the structure of the play deeply, it remains similar and identical throughout the play. It is only the surface level that keeps on changing. Their
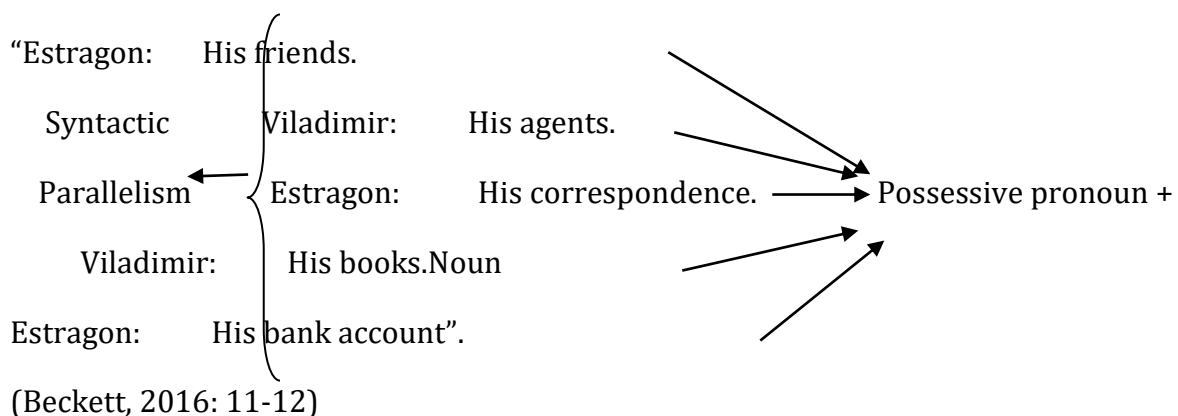
dialogues alterand their conversation dwell round various subjects like talking about Godot, and committing suicide but their basic motif remains the same. This is how life carries us and this is how language works. There is strong continuity in the working of language and in the regularity of the play.

This interconnection of language, life, and waiting for Godot is shown in Table 1

Same rhythm	Various preoccupations	Camus' Myth of Sysiphus
Langue remains same	Parole varies	de Saussure's Course De Linguistique
Similar syntactic structure	Semantic variation	Beckett's Waiting for Godot
Same circular structure and same characters	Variation in dialogues and activities	Beckett's Waiting for Godot
Same underlying motif of waiting	Various activities to kill the time	Beckett's Waiting for Godot

Table No: 1

Studying the play Waiting for Godot with the analytical lens of the third point i.e. similar syntactic structure and semantic variation, various direct examples can be quoted to support the argument. Here is an excerpt of the play that is the strong reflection of these linguistic choices of semantics and syntax. This proves that de Saussure's langue and parole and Beckett's choice of language stand in a very close connection to each other.

"Estragon: His friends.

Syntactic   Viladimir: His agents.

Parallelism   Estragon: His correspondence. ⟶ Possessive pronoun +

Viladimir: His books.Noun

Estragon: His bank account".

(Beckett, 2016: 11-12)

These reflections of syntactic similarity and semantic variation lend an in-depth meaning to the play. Beckett has represented different colors of human life not only in form of thematic appeal but also exploited language as tool of manifestation and representation.

Diminutive Syntactic Structures, Crude Semantics and Theme of Nothingness

Nothingness is the optimal word that suggests the theme of the play. Either directly or indirectly, this nothingness is imprinted in the language that has diminutive syntax and crude semantics as they find nothing to manifest and elaborate. This brevity of sentences and crudeness of semantic choices stay a suitable option for the characters who find speaking as the only remedy to minimize their agonizing state of waiting. Despite the fact that they have speaking as only choice to pass the time, they have nothing to speak. The dialogues of both characters are sufficient evidence of this permeated nothingness.

The syntactic structure and semantic choices seem to be minimized and language is stamped with nothingness. It depicts that Beckett has used a reduced form of language and silence to picture life that is obsessed with nothingness. Beckett has tried to convey more and more by using less and less.

 "Viladimir: We have that excuse.

Estragon: It's so we won't hear.

Viladimir: We have our reasons.

Estragon: All the dead voices.

Viladimir: They make a noise like wings.

Estragon: Like leaves.

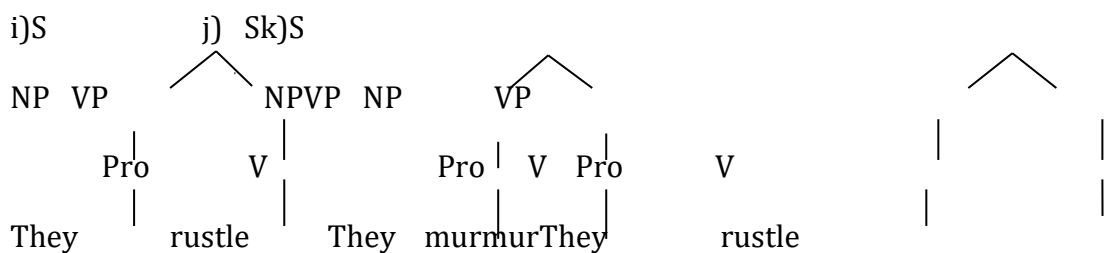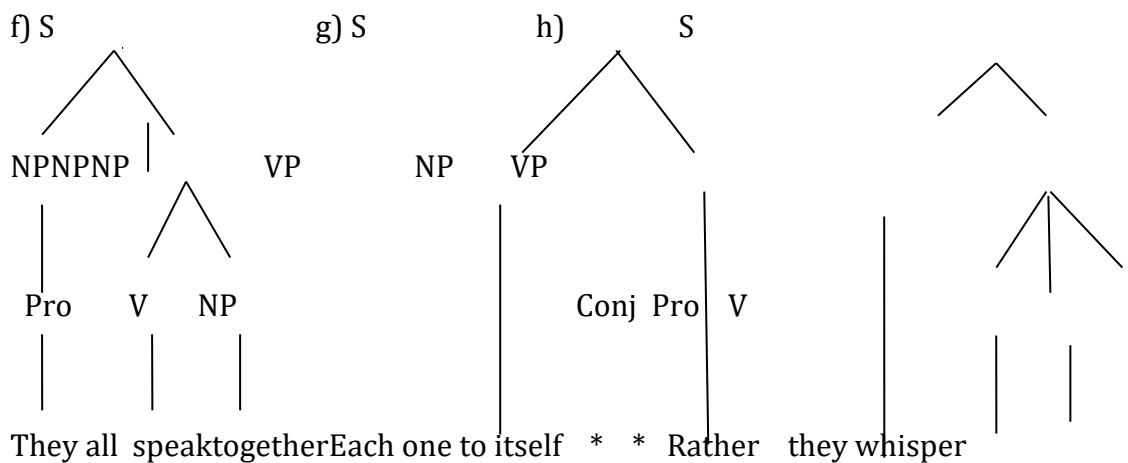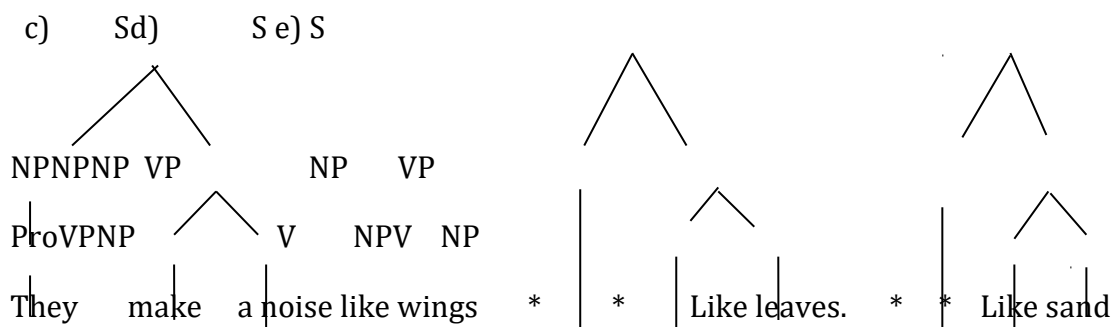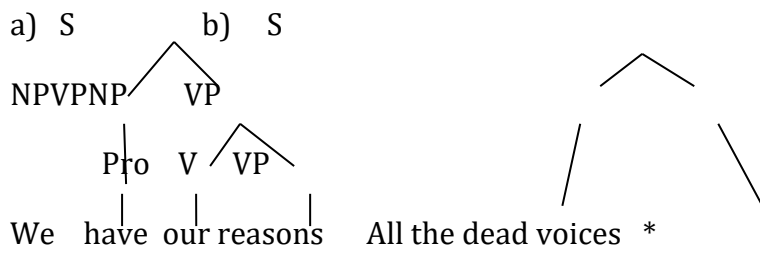Viladimir: Like sand.

Estragon: Like leaves.

Silence".

(Beckett, 2016: 52)

The semantic and syntactic study of the excerpt reveals the nothingness that has victimized the poor tramps. Estragon and Viladimir are capable of listening only the dead voices that sound like leaves and sand. A keen study of the extract shows how the nothingness has affected the structure of sentences that is minimized to two or three words. The brief utterances of tramps show the inner void of their characters. They are just throwing the words to fill the gap. If they do not talk, silence takes the hold.

A Glance at Diminutive Syntax

Diminutive syntactic structure refers to minimization of syntax by lesser use of sentence constituents. Beckett seems to be extraordinary mindful while putting his crude words in a syntactic order.Here are some examples from the text of the play:

a) S   b) S

NPVPNP   VP

        Pro   V   VP

We   have our reasons   All the dead voices   *

c)   Sd)   S e) S

NPNPNP VP   NP   VP

ProVPNP   V   NPV NP

They   make   a noise like wings   *   *   Like leaves.   *   *   Like sand

f) S   g) S   h)   S

NPNPNP   VP   NP   VP

     Pro   V   NP   Conj Pro V

They all speaktogetherEach one to itself   *   * Rather   they whisper

i)S   j) Sk)S

NP VP   NPVP NP   VP

        Pro   V   Pro   V Pro   V

They   rustle   They   murmurThey   rustle

These tree diagrams show the diminutive syntactic structures that hardly occupy the required constituents and this diminution even leads to ungrammatical sentences that seem to make no sense. These reduced structures do not allow the words to convey the messages of the speakers. There is no use of determiner to qualify the speech. Sentences have been reduced to phrases that hardly carry nouns and verbs. Resultantly, nothingness takes the hold that is the prominent subject of the play itself.

The nothingness or meaninglessness of language becomes clear when Estragon and Viladimir fail to find any suitable word to describe the trace of Lucky's neck. The speech of Lucky can be seen as another example of this nothingness conveyed by language itself. Especially, at the end of his speech, the syntax is totally deteriorated consisting of little phrases and isolated words.

"Estragon: Then adieu.

    Pozzo: Adieu.

    Viladimir: Adieu.

    Pozzo: Adieu.

    Silence.   No one moves.

    Viladimir: Adieu.

    Pozzo: Adieu.

    Estragon: Adieu.

Silence".

 (Beckett, 2016: 36-37)

Nothingness has been absorbed in the language both on semantic and syntactic level. The syntax has been reduced to mere one or two words and semantics has been deteriorated by their inability to utter a new word. They are just replicating the meaningless utterances of one after another. Estragon, Viladimir and Pozzo have the same word for bidding farewell to each other. They repeat 'Adieu' for seven times without moving as they are unable to utter new and refined words. This play of semantics and syntax is making the theme of meaninglessness more clear.

Elliptic Syntactic Structures, Lack of Semantic Qualifier and Theme of Absurdity

Waiting for Godot epitomizes this absurd state of man amid the various purposeless purposes. Everything in and about this play is absurd and nonsensical. The theme of absurdity chases the play from the very beginning till the end. The plot of the play is absurd with the same absurd situation repeated on two consecutive days or might be continued for more days if Beckett would have enlarged the play.

It is noteworthy here that absurdity is the main theme ofWaiting for Godot. It is centripetal force around which the main characters and action of the play revolve. It should not be overlooked here that waiting which is dominating occurrence throughout the play is also an absurdity. They do nothing but waiting apart from the fact that they do not have minimal idea about identity of Godot and his would be bestowed favor for them. They are just wedged and jammed over there.

When we try to find the expression of this innate absurdity in the language of Estragon and Vliadimir, the language seems to be evident of this absurd state. If we analyze the syntactic structure of the play, ellipses are abundant in number. As it has been discussed earlier, a wide range of the dialogues of the play contains only one or two words, with no qualifiers. The dialogues which have considerable length often carry ellipses. The elliptic structure with minimal semantic qualifier makes their condition more absurd and meaningless.

> "Viladimir: Wait…we embraced…we were happy…happy…what do we do now   that we're happy…go on waiting…waiting…let me think…it's coming …go on   waiting…now that we're happy…let me see…ah!".

(Beckett, 2016: 55)

A casual reading of this text will surely leave its reader in uncertainty because the text does not make sense semantically. The key words like 'embraced', 'happy'', 'waiting', 'coming', and 'think' are from different semantic fields. A kind of metonymic relation can be felt in the words 'embrace and happy' and 'coming and waiting'. But logically, it does not impart any notion to guess out the meaning of this utterance which jumps from past to present and from present to future intentions. This is elliptic-syntactical structure that is more apt to show the confusion of the minds of character. Confusion is also the crucial element of the theatre of absurd. This is how language as an active mechanism works and builds the theme not only with its confinement to semantics but also with syntax. Here the word 'waiting' is repeated three times but ellipse have been put twelve times. It seems that in these three lines Beckett has been exploiting the syntax more vigorously than semantics.

The text becomes a complicated occurrence with its deficient and unexplained semantic. Semantic qualifier lends clarity and elaboration to any text. But the lack of semantic elaboration or syntactic unity leaves an absurd impression on the mind of hearer. The utterances are simply reflections of the absurdities.

Another example of this illogical formation of language is:

> "Estragon: That's to say…you understand…the dusk…the strain…waiting…I confess…I imagined…for a second…"

(Beckett, 2016: 17)

The ellipses join these sentences hence the word order is neither sequential nor meaningful. The repetition of noun phrase also seems absurd when it does not repeat the determinant with the crucial word of the play.

the dusk   the strain   waiting

↓   ↓   ↓

Determiner + Noun   Determiner + Noun   Noun
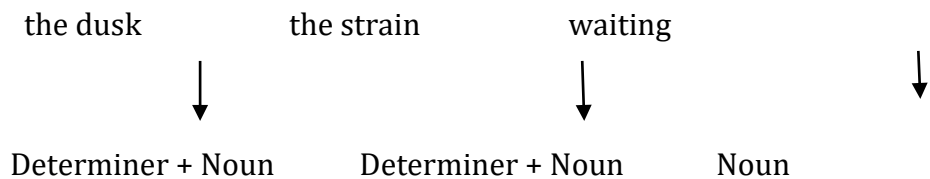
The syntactic choice seems absurd when it places determiner with dusk and strain but the key word of the play 'waiting' has been written without definite article that is used to refer specific things or the things that are already known. But it is quite absurd that the significance of the single act of waiting has been minimized here. Moreover, the utterance starts with present tense and ends in past tense. This again shows grammatical or structural deviation that does not sound reasonable. If we analyze the verbs of the text, the collocation of words 'understand' and 'confess' sounds reasonable but the addition of 'imagined' changes the real effect of the statement and makes it unreal and absurd.

Conclusion

The study justifiably holds the perspective of structuralism that meanings are inherent in the structures. The basic structure of utterance can convey, restrict, change or manipulate the meaning. The study argues that language is not only a passive carrier of meaning but becomes the creator of meaning in itself. The structuralism's perspective of sign and signified has also given a valuable edge to indicate the semantics as carrier of hidden meaning. The observance, violation, manipulation and exploitation of semantic and syntactic choices in Waiting for Godot are highly considerable in the retrieval of meaning and make the play thematically significant.

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